



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Jack Miller at (858) 694-3595

WEST NILE VIRUS BIRD CASES AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH *Twelve More Dead Birds Test Positive for West Nile Virus in the County*

County Vector Control officials announced today that 12 more dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), bringing the total number of positive birds to 42 this season. That exceeds last year's total of 34 infected birds and there are still two more months left in the mosquito-breeding season this year.

The confirmed positive birds were found in Fallbrook (3), Escondido (2), Alpine (2), Campo, Chula Vista, Poway, El Cajon and San Marcos. The majority of the 42 birds have been found in the North County.

"We've reached an all-time high of 42 positive birds in one season and the mosquito-breeding season isn't over yet," said Gary Erbeck, director of the Department of Environmental Health. "San Diego County residents, especially those in the North County where most of the infected birds have been found, need to take personal protection measures. Research has shown that using two or more personal protection measures reduces your risk of mosquito bites by 50 percent."

Personal protection measures include staying indoors at dawn and dusk, wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors, and using repellents insect containing DEET, Picaridin or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus.

To prevent mosquitoes from breeding around the home, eliminate standing water sources, such as pools that have turned green with algae, birdbaths or ornamental ponds. If the water cannot be eliminated, mosquito-eating fish can be placed in pools and ponds to control mosquito breeding. The County provides the mosquito fish free at 14 locations countywide.

Residents are urged to report dead birds found throughout the County so the Vector Control Program can test them for West Nile virus. Residents should report dead crows, ravens, jays, hawks or owls if they meet the following criteria: they have been dead for less than 24 hours, do not have a foul odor, are not covered with ants or flies, are not stiff, and if their bodies are intact and have not been hit by a car, shot, or killed by animals. To report dead birds, or to get information about mosquito fish and West Nile virus, visit the County's Web site at www.SDFightTheBite.com or call 1-888-551-INFO (4636).

Statewide this year, there have been eight human deaths from West Nile virus and 416 people have been infected. In addition, 277 horses have tested positive for WNV, resulting in the deaths of 120 of the horses. A total of 1,968 dead birds have tested positive this year in the state. One human illness was reported in San Diego County, however it was not acquired here. ###